

**ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE**

A system for hybrid electronic/photonic switching of traffic in a node of a communications network includes a plurality of interfaces; an electronic cross-connect (EXC); and a photonic cross-connect (PXC). Each interface is designed to translate a respective traffic stream between corresponding electronic and optical signals. The EXC selectively maps an electronic signal through a selected one of the interfaces, and the PXC selectively couples an optical signal between the selected interface and a selected one of at least two optical channels of the communications network.

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